Published in Paris

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Paris has always been a gathering place for creative people, for people with money and for people who wished they were creative or had money, and Paris between the two world wars was no different. The Americans, for whom the rate of exchange was favourable, were the most visible, but England and the rest of Europe were also well-represented. The Paris of the nineteen-twenties and thirties was the Paris of the cafés, especially the Dôme, the Sélect and the Montparnasse, all located in the quartier of Montparnasse, where any evening one might see the people who were the heart of this world: Josephine Baker, Picasso, Chevalier, Hemingway, Man Ray, Kiki, Stein, Pound, Joyce and countless others, enjoying each others company and the passing crowds.

figures alike browsed her shelves; many of the latter staying on to discuss their newest works with her. This soon developed into a regular salon, with notables such as Joyce, Hemingway, and Pound taking part. They also tended to use the store as their mailing address, the assistants as their secretaries and Shakespeare and Co. as their distributing agents. Beach never seems to have denied them these privileges, even in the days when she was trying to cope with Joyce and his eternal revisions of the proofs of Ulysses.

In the summer of 1921, a despondent Joyce dropped in to see Beach and tell her the latest crisis in his struggle to get Ulysses published. The first installment which had just appeared in the Little review had been declared obscene by the United States Post Office and all copies of that issue had had to be suppressed. From England had come similar news; after seven years of work, Joyce faced the very real prospect of never seeing his book in print.

Beach said later that she was not certain why she did so, but she found herself asking Joyce if he would allow Shakespeare and Co. the honour of publishing his work. She had no publishing experience, no experience with distribution problems, none with proof reading and revisions, in fact, even as a bookstore operator, she was as yet relatively inexperienced. But she asked and he accepted - joyously - and there it all began. By the mid-twenties tourists were flooding to rue de l'Odéon, seeking her out, buying copies of Ulysses and making her and her store a resounding success.

The first edition of Ulysses appeared in 1922, after many, many problems for all involved. When, at last, the first copies came from the press on February 2, Beach must have felt a sense of pride and relief. But, this was just the beginning of her involvement with Ulysses. She became Joyce's secretary, distribution agent; she arranged for translations of the work to be published in many European countries; she took care of all his finances, and guarded him from his public. If she ever found the job too heavy, she never complained. Subsequent editions kept her busy until 1930, but she found time in 1927 to issue Pomes penyeach and in 1930 to publish an apologia of Finnegan's wake which appeared under the title: Our exagmination round his factification for incamination of work in progress.

By her championing of Joyce and his so-called erotic books, Beach was thought of by many as a publisher of erotic books in general, and was offered from time to time other works in this vein. At one point she felt she was being offered any work that was considered obscene in the United States. In her own defence she offered her opinion that the erotic in Ulysses had its place and that part of the importance of the book is due to the way Joyce deals with the subject. As to why she had published only works by Joyce, she replied that nobody else seemed interesting enough to her. By her inexperience, and in spite of it, she succeeded in leaving us with a masterpiece.

Hours Press

This was a press that should never have succeeded. In 1929 a young aristocratic Englishwoman, Nancy Cunard, realized an ambition when she was able to buy a hand-press and other equipment from Bill Bird's defunct Three Mountains Press. She arranged for it all to be shipped to a farm in Réanville, some 60 miles from Paris. Bird arranged for a master printer to join her and teach her the rudiments of the printing art. The expert was not very impressed, when on his arrival, he went into the converted stable to find his new apprentice already setting type; too impatient to wait, she wanted to learn as much and as fast as possible and then do it all on her own.

The fledgling printer had definite ideas about her press and its products; the press would be an innovative one, producing experimental poetry, and other non-conforming literary outpourings; nothing could be too new for her. She decided to concentrate on "new people," unpublished authors, but her brave hopes suffered a slight setback when one of the first manuscripts sent to her by her friend, Norman Douglas was his Report on the pumice industry of the Lipari Islands, written several years before at the request of the British Foreign Office. Here was nothing innovative or non-conforming, but a dry conventional government report with little artistic or literary value. It did have one merit: it provided the novice printer with exactly the practice she needed in learning how to set 11-point type in the composing stick. Two weeks of work produced eighty copies, which were sent to the author as a gift from the press. This small six page pamphlet has since become one of the most sought-after items for collectors of Norman Douglas.

The first scheduled Hours Press release was Perronik the fool, by another old friend, George Moore. Moore was a long time literary adviser to Cunard, and as such demanded the honour of being the first author published by her press, even though he was a little apprehensive about the quality of the finished product. He need not have worried; Cunard was determined to present him with a finely printed book. In her anxiety, she produced at least four versions of the title page, before she was satisfied with the results. Moore's only complaint, after seeing the two hundred copies she produced, was that the gutters were too wide and that she needed to go back to the early printers to learn layout and spacing. This first Hours Press book was a financial success; within ten days of publication it had paid for itself. But again it was not an experimental piece. It was only after this work that her original idea could be brought about. The next three items were at last non-conformist: Alfonso Guevara's St. George at Silene, Richard Aldington's special Christmas greeting Hark, the herald and Louis Aragon's translation of The Hunting of the Snark.

Another item of this first year was a Norman Douglas work, One day; an introspective account of a day spent wandering around Athens. It is interesting both for the description of Athens and for the insight into the author's own mind, and proved to be one of the printer's most profitable books. All copies were sold to subscribers before publication.

Moore and Douglas were only two of the many literary friends who stood ready to assist Cunard in selecting her next books. Another was Richard Aldington, who proposed that she print his long philosophical poem, The eaten heart. Based on a medieval legend, it dramatises Aldington's belief in the inescapable loneliness of the soul. Cunard, in reading the work, found it somewhat confusing, and it was only through setting type for it, that, letter by letter, she began to understand it. She was, however, sceptical that its readers would fully appreciate Aldington's concepts. She need not have worried; it was another Hours Press success.

Yet another friend came along with one of his works. Cunard was remarkably fortunate in her literary acquaintances; for this was Arthur Symons, with his three descriptive essays, Mes Souvenirs. And so she ended her first year. Now she paused to take stock. She had accomplished much, but the problems she had had and had learned from, had taught her one thing; that unless she was willing to devote herself full time to the press, she must move to Paris, where deliveries, distribution and assistants were easier to come by.

The new store opened in the winter of 1930 in Montparnasse. Now Cunard had two helpers, Henry Crowder as typesetter and composer and Georges Sadoul as secretarial assistant. To celebrate the opening she announced the Paris, or second series of Hours Press books, a miscellany of novels, poems and pieces set to music. 1930 was her most productive year with a total of ten books issuing from her hand press. Ezra Pound, Robert Graves, Laura Riding and Samuel Beckett were all represented as well as Henry Crowder. This production line had exhausted her by late summer and she was fortunate enough to find Wyn Henderson, formerly associated with Aquila Press in London, willing to act as temporary manager. It was during this necessary holiday, that she found her interest in Negro culture being stirred by Crowder's accounts of racial injustice in America. By the beginning of 1931 she knew that she definitely wanted to devote her time to an anthology encompassing the whole of Negro cultural history, though the manuscripts she had been promised would, she estimated, take at least another year to edit and revise. Still she was determined to close the Press down by April. The many difficulties involved in producing books acceptable to her experimental authors, the fact that some of her friends had refused to accept Henderson as her manager and her ever-increasing desire to work on the Negro anthology, all contributed to the demise of the Press. The last two works produced by it epitomize the problems. Henderson had procured from Havelock Ellis the recently completed manuscript of his essay The revaluation of obscenity and did not inform Cunard until the book came off the press. Although upset by the secrecy involved, Cunard had to acknowledge its attractive format and that the entire edition had been sold by subscription before publication.

The last item Cunard wanted to print was a fantasy by George Moore. It seemed fitting to begin and end with the same author. She advertised a five hundred copy signed edition of The talking pine and produced a beautifully set and spaced work. But Moore felt that printing his dream sequence was only going to make him and Cunard look ridiculous, and refused

to sign the copies. All arguments were to no avail. The edition had to be distributed unsigned. This last debacle had cost the Press dearly, and upon closing, the books showed Cunard bankrupt. Henderson was willing to continue, but Cunard had had enough. By the spring of 1934 she had sold all but one press and some type, keeping these as souvenirs of her achievements.

At the Sign of the Black Manikin

In contrast to Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare and Company, the bookstore operated by Edward W. Titus At the Sign of the Black Manikin was not a gathering place for intellectuals and authors; rather, Titus looked upon his store as a refuge from the temperament and inexhaustible energies of his wife, Helena Rubenstein, and from this refuge he excluded people he did not like and those he considered to be of questionable taste and refinement. He also wanted the Black Manikin to be a focal point for bibliophiles and art lovers, not necessarily a profit making enterprise. If it made money, tant pis, if not, funds were usually available from his wife's successful cosmetic business.

Titus had an encyclopedic knowledge of art and literature, and in its early years, the Black Manikin was a combination of rare book room and gallery. Browsers were able to see a rich collection of Americana, picked up mainly in Europe, a very good reference library of constitutional law and an excellent collection of first editions of Verlaine, to list only the highlights. But within two years of its founding in 1924, Titus decided he wanted to become a publisher, and announced to his friends that he would now consider their literary and artistic output for publication. The printing would be done by a neighbourhood firm, Imprimerie Crete.

His first publication was Rococo, by Ralph Cheever Dunning. This thin elegant little volume was brought out in a limited edition of five hundred copies. Rococo aroused a good deal of comment. When Ezra Pound praised the poem, he was accused of having done so without having read it. The bickering about the worth of Dunning's work continued until the death of one of his chief detractors, Ernest Walsh, of the literary review This Quarter. Shortly before Dunning's death in 1930, Titus published a second work, Windfalls, which caused Pound to name him one of the four or five poets of our time. Windfalls, in spite of this praise, lost Titus money, but this was soon recouped by other publications.

The second Black Manikin book was Ludwig Lewisohn's The case of Mr. Crump, which details the collapse of Lewisohn's marriage to a woman who must have rivalled Xantippe. A long novel, it was hurriedly written and found little favour with American publishers. Just before publishing it at his own expense, the author offered it to Titus, who immediately rushed it into print. The review copies sent to America brought in such a flow of orders that Titus marked the first limited edition "For America". But the American Post Office began to delay delivery to certain cities and finally blocked

all shipments by declaring Mr. Crump unmailable. Notwithstanding this disappointment, Mr. Crump became a best seller for Titus and was the only work ever reissued by him.

In 1927, the works brought out by the Black Manikin proved to be of little literary value but they did show that Titus was willing to take a chance on unknowns. Two works, Itchwyrth's The cheese girl in New-Bench and Kenneth Wells' Absit omen quickly went out of print, and another brought him into association with Polia Chentoff, an attractive Polish artist who would be responsible for the cadaverous portrait of Dunning in Windfalls. She was also to be the cause of many arguments between Titus and Madame Rubenstein, who disapproved of her husband's close friendship with this talented woman. The first work Chentoff did for the Black Manikin was a series of woodcuts for Manuel Komroff's The voice of fire, a sly, malicious, anti-clerical novelette, that Komroff knew, would not be published in America. So he came to Paris, and did most of the final writing and polishing at a café near the Dôme. As with The Case of Mr. Crump, Titus grabbed at this work as soon as it was finished and it became the one item of real literary value published by Titus in 1927.

1928 brought Some gentlemen of the Renaissance, by William Van Wyck, four free verse portraits of Giotto, Michelangelo, Galileo and Richelieu, all of which hurl challenges at the Church and its senile values. Titus, feeling that this work would usher in a New Restoration, issued it in a large format and type to ensure it at least a visual grandeur, even if the new Renaissance did not actually come about. Mary Butts' Imaginary letters and Pierre Minet's Circoncision du coeur also appeared in 1928.

One might have expected Titus to retrench in 1929, the year of the Wall Street crash and the return to America of many expatriates. Their funds might have run out, but not those of Titus. 1929 was the year in which Titus announced plans to construct an apartment building on the Blvd. Raspail, which would include a three hundred seat American theatre. Titus himself would be its manager and director and the theatre would put on only the most modern dramas. He also announced the establishment of a new literary quarterly devoted solely to modern American English writers. As it turned out, this new review was Ethel Moorhead's old This Quarter, that she had tried to continue after the death of Ernest Walsh, but soon found to be an impossible task. Titus maintained that he would keep the spirit of the old review as much as possible, but he soon showed he had a preference for the established writers, and This Quarter was no longer the review it once had been.

At the same time Titus recouped his losses on Windfalls and The Legend of Ermengarde, by Uc Saine (a fourteenth century Provençal troubadour) by publishing D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's lover. Lawrence, troubled by the amount of piracy with which he had to contend, both in America and in Europe, and by the quality of the pirated editions, had determined to issue another edition. But the publishers in Paris showed little interest, even Sylvia Beach could not be swayed by his charm, although she did suggest Lawrence see Titus. Titus was very interested, and the financial arrangements worked out by both men gave them rights to substantial profits. The Titus edition did not bear the Black Manikin imprint; this

could have been due to the fact that Titus did not publish reprints and only agreed to do so in this case as Lawrence was supplying some new material My skirmish with Jolly Roger. The black year 1929 ended very well for Titus.

He followed the furor of Lady Chatterley's lover by publishing Kiki's memoirs. Kiki, a habituée of the Montparnasse cafés and mascot of the quartier seems to have been the mistress of a great many famous people. Titus had long been after her to write her memoirs and after two years' effort she did so. Now the problem was to translate her work with the same style, the same verve, and the same ingenuity with which it had been written. The translation by Samuel Putnam, appeared early in 1930, and was a tremendous success. It seems to have pleased everyone, especially Kiki, who offered to learn English, in order to translate anything that Putnam might write.

Kiki was the high point of 1930, the next two Black Manikin books were its lows. On the terrace, by William Van Wyck, was called "a limp entry" in the Paris journals, while Rimbaud's Une saison en enfer merited little comment.

By 1931, Titus's This Quarter had gained a name and to prove that he was still interested in new writers he decided to issue a series of novelettes all to be done by writers who found it difficult to get their work published. One was Morley Callaghan with his story of lesbian love, No man's meat. Other authors in the series were Kathleen Coyle, Laura Cherry and Ludwig Lewisohn, who had two books published this year: The Romantic; a contemporary legend and a reprint of The case of Mr. Crump, with a preface by Thomas Mann.

By 1932 Titus had decided to end his publishing career and in the spring the last Black Manikin book appeared. It became one of the most sought after items ever issued by the press. Anaïs Nin's D.H. Lawrence: an unprofessional study. It was soon followed by the last issue of This Quarter and seven years after its first publication, the Black Manikin Press died.

The Black Sun Press

The excitement of seeing their first production through the press brought two young Americans to the realization that they had to become publishers. Harry and Mary (Polly to her friends) Crosby had already been in Paris for three years, dividing their time between riotous living and writing poetry. Polly had finished her collection of poems first, and after changing her name to the more poetic "Caresse", she and Harry set off to find a printer. Their first two books were done by a local firm, Léon Pinchon, who finished printing Caresse's Crosses of gold in January 1925. By October Harry's Sonnets for Caresse appeared. Both of these early works were marked "Not for sale". Their domestic game of giving each other ideas and rhymes meant a steady increase in the amount they wrote, and they began to think of publishing in earnest. They had found

a master hand-printer near them, and their library of finely printed books would give them ideas on papers and formats. Cost being no object to this wealthy couple, they would be able to issue handsome items. And so the Black Sun Press was born. Caresse was to be responsible for layout and design, Harry would select the books they would publish and both would decide on binding and paper. Their first four books were Caresse's The Stranger and Painted shores and Harry's Red skeltons and a reissue of Sonnets for Caresse. But the Black Sun's publications were by no means limited only to its owners' own work. Early in his publishing career Harry began to correspond with D.H. Lawrence. Both were sun worshippers and after travelling in Egypt and reading Lawrence's Plumed serpent, Harry wrote to Lawrence, asking him for a "Sun" book Black Sun might publish, and offering him the price of one hundred gold pieces. Charmed by the idea of being paid in gold, Lawrence sent The Sun. In return, Harry sent samples of his own work, and asked Lawrence to write an introduction for his soon-to-be-published Chariot of the sun. Gifts and compliments continued to fly back and forth, especially when Harry's Chariot became a companion volume to Lawrence's Sun, both being issued in the spring of 1928.

In the fall of that year, Harry's cousin Walter Berry died and left the Crosbys a library of some eight thousand volumes. Among many other treasures was a group of letters from Marcel Proust to Berry. The Crosbys decided to have them translated and, after editing, to issue them under the Black Sun imprint. They were to prove an impressive item in Black Sun's inventory. Another windfall was a package of letters from Henry James to the equally elegant Berry. These letters were issued in a volume which appeared in October 1928 and was the first Black Sun item to bear the notation "To be sold at Marks", an indication of the agreement with the New York dealer to distribute their publications in the United States.

By 1929, James Joyce was a much sought-after literary figure and the Crosbys were no different from other publishers who wanted to meet and publish Joyce. But he was wary of all his admirers and kept them all at bay. The Crosbys finally met Joyce through mutual friends and discoverd in each other similar interests. After many meetings, the Crosbys had worked up enough courage to ask him for a sequence from his Work in progress they might publish. Anxious to please, the Crosbys decided to allow him unlimited corrections on the proofs - a mistake - as two months after the proofs had been delivered, Joyce was still revising. Harry once saw a revision that had taken three days to write. But by mid-May, all revisions were complete and Tales told of Shem and Shaun was printed on schedule. Relieved, the Crosbys returned to their other interests and to Lawrence, who had arrived in Paris in March. Their first meeting was a little disappointing, as the Crosbys and the Lawrences realized that they were not the kindred spirits they had imagined themselves to be. Still, Lawrence agreed to let Black Sun publish the manuscript he had brought along. His Escaped cock appeared in September, and Lawrence was again pleased by its format. But problems did arise. Lawrence felt the price to be absurd and again his feeling of being exploited by the booksellers came to the fore.

Other work kept the Crosbys busy throughout the fall until their trip back to America in November. Harry had become very preoccupied with death in recent months and despite the excitement of being "home", by early December he seems to have become overwhelmed by a deep depression. On December tenth, he committed suicide. On December thirteenth, as scheduled, Caresse sailed back to France. That spring saw the publication of the Proust-Berry letters in French with the English translation by Harry and Caresse, and also witnessed the first meeting of Caresse and Ezra Pound, which led to the Black Sun edition of Imaginary letters, their first appearance in book form.

1931 Caresse devoted to Harry. She published four volumes of his poems: a reissue of Chariot of the sun, Sleeping together, Torchbearer and Transit of Venus; each with an introduction by an acknowledged poet. She also published her own tribute Poems for Harry Crosby.

After this, the tone of the Press changed. Caresse had decided that she was now more interested in a commercial operation along the lines of Tauchnitz and its Continental Editions. The first publication in the Crosby Continental Editions was Hemingway's Torrents of spring, with ten others following in 1932. But the series was not a financial success and during the years 1933-35 she suspended operations.

From New York in 1936, Caresse tried to begin again, issuing a deluxe edition of the Collected poems of James Joyce, George Grosz's Interregnum and Surrealism by the artist and art dealer Julian Levy. During the forties and fifties, other publications supervised by Caresse appeared, but, in reality, the Black Sun had set with her tribute to her publishing partner and husband.

Contact Publishing Company

Robert McAlmon regarded writing and publishing as an integral part of his social life rather than an activity to be undertaken in a regular and organized manner, and this philosophy proved to be his downfall.

McAlmon arrived in Paris in the fall of 1921 and soon began to frequent Shakespeare and Co., with the intention of meeting Joyce. Armed with introductions from Sylvia Beach and Harriet Weaver, Joyce's English publisher and friend, McAlmon soon was helping him revise Ulysses, and within a short time, was showing Joyce samples of his poems. Joyce praised them and inquired into the possibility of having them published by Beach, but she, already overwhelmed by Ulysses, refused to take on any more work. McAlmon, taking matters into his own hands, went to Darantière, who managed to print three hundred copies of his Hasty bunch in between sheets of Ulysses. Seeing his work in print encouraged McAlmon and he had visions of reviving Contact, a magazine he had edited in New York jointly with William Carlos Williams. Nothing came of this, but he managed to publish seven books in 1923 using Shakespeare and Co. as a mailing address and distribution agent. The seven were poor examples of good publishing; the editing and revision were slipshod and the proof-reading was worse. About the only thing in their favour was the fine printing by Darantière. One of

the authors was Bryher, McAlmon's wife, who brought out Two selves. A thinly disguised autobiography, it is her life before she met and married her husband, while on a trip to New York with Hilda Doolittle. Suffering still under parental restraints, marriage meant for her freedom and for him money to travel. For both, it was purely a marriage of convenience.

1923 also saw McAlmon issuing a book Three stories and ten poems, by Hemingway, one by his friend W.C. Williams, Spring and all, his own biography Post-adolescence as well as a collection of short stories, a Companion volume to his Hasty bunch.

1924 was relatively quiet. He had begun drinking heavily and his only publication was his own Village; as it happened through a fifteen year period. Although disorganized, a hallmark of most of his work, it received favourable reviews for its robust style and intelligent picture of American small-town life.

By now McAlmon had caught the attention of Gertrude Stein, who was still looking for a publisher for her magnum opus, The making of Americans. She had completed it in 1911 and since then it had been several times across the Atlantic Ocean and English Channel. Hamingway had arranged for the Transatlantic Review to serialize it, but the magazine had folded before its completion. Still, interest had been aroused and Stein was again hopeful of its complete publication. McAlmon volunteered, provided he could produce it in one or two volumes, and subscriptions could be raised to defray some of the costs. After all her opposition to cutting even one word, Stein backed down and it became a 1925 Contact publication.

McAlmon was still travelling in 1926, he was drinking less and he found himself able to work again. By June he had two of his announced publications ready: John Hermann's saga of the jazz age, What happened and Hilda Doolittle's Palimpsest. What happened caused some problems. McAlmon felt it to be a realistic picture of adolescence in America and was totally unprepared for its being banned, both in England and in the United States. He had known it would not be a financial success, but to have it banned from the very markets for which it was designed meant a great loss for the company.

He was much more fortunate with Palimpsest, being actually able to sell seven hundred sets of sheets to Houghton Mifflin of Boston, the first time this had happened to a Contact edition, and the book received much praise for its style and for its author's achievement in writing about subjects entirely divorced from her background.

The other two books of 1926, his own Portrait of a generation and Robert Coates' Eater of darkness were not successes, and caused him to settle down and do more work. 1926 also saw his divorce from Bryher, an event celebrated on both sides, especially by her father, who settled a very generous allowance on McAlmon, causing him to be nicknamed "Robert McAlimony".

McAlmon spent 1927 travelling through Mexico and the United States, only returning to Paris in the spring of 1928. He found many new faces in the cafés, among them two Canadians who interested him very much. In his

opinion, John Glassco and his friend Graeme Taylor were the most promising young writers he had met, and while he helped them to get their material published, none of it ever appeared under the Contact imprint. McAlmon decided to suspend publication in 1928, and during this hiatus, Glassco contracted such a serious case of T.B. that he was forced to return to Canada. When the opportunity arose in 1929, the chance was gone. The 1929 books were either "a bore" (Sato's Quaint tales of Samurais) or obscene (Edwin Lantham's Sailors don't care). Only McAlmon's North America, continent of conjecture, a badly marred and unfinished work, aroused some critical reactions.

In 1930 McAlmon returned to America, and the Parisian Contact Publishing Company died; a victim of too much money. McAlmon's wealth meant that he could afford to publish works that had been rejected by other publishers and works that were unfinished, unrevised and badly proof-read, but wealth also meant that he could afford to be wasteful. And this waste brought about the downfall of his Contact Publishing Company.

The Obelisk Press

Robert McAlmon published books other publishers rejected; Jack Kahane of the Obelisk Press published books no other publisher dared issue. The Obelisk Press published some of the most controversial literature of the twentieth century; only the approach of war and the death of its owner ended the ten year reign of this Parisian guardian of printing liberty.

Kahane's first venture in France was an effort to take part in the rise in popularity of James Joyce. He was able to get from him two short manuscripts, publishing the first in 1930 under the title: Haveth childers everywhere, with the imprint: J. Kahane and H. Babou; the Obelisk Press being officially established only in 1931. This deluxe edition did not sell and the two new partners faced bankruptcy, until a chance meeting with Eldridge Adams brought the offer that saved them. Adams, the owner of the New York based Fountain Press was willing to buy half of the edition for distribution in America at a price that enabled them to clear a small profit.

But the book that really brought their name to the attention of the public was also the book that set Kahane's course for the next decade. In 1931 a first novel by the Englishwoman, Norah James, had been confiscated by the London police and declared obscene. His anger aroused, Kahane arranged for the work to be printed in Paris. Within a month, Sleeveless errand was a best seller at one hundred francs a copy.

After problems with Babou, who was expanding the business in all directions and losing money on everything he did, his own long illness and the subsequent loss of any profits derived from the Joyce and James items, Kahane decided to go it alone, connecting himself only with the necessary printer. The printer he chose was Servant's Vendôme Press and the name

for his new enterprise was the Obelisk Press, a tie-in with the Egyptian obelisk that stands in the Place Vendôme. His inventory consisted of the above-named James and Joyce items, and a mediocre novel he had translated himself, The lamb, by Philippe Heriat.

In the beginning, nobody seemed to have a banned book they wanted published, and Kahane was beginning to worry, until he discovered a collection of short stories, Storm, by Peter Neagoe, an associate of Samuel Putnam's New Review Publications, who had originaly published the work. Fortunately it had just been banned in America, so Kahane, after rearranging the order of the stories and having Neagoe add a few more, published it in a striking black and white jacket, with a reproduction of the United States Customs Office letter declaring it banned printed on the back. The money began to roll in - Kahane seemed to be on his way - only to be disappointed by the lack of attention paid to his next book, a reprint of Joyce's Pomes penyeach. Even with the addition of a reproduction of Joyce's handwriting and his daughter Lucia's letters, it did not sell.

With three of the books he issued in 1933, he had much more luck. All three had been banned in England, and the Obelisk edition assured Kahane of financial stability. These were Boy, by James Hanley; The well of loneliness, by Radclyffe Hall and Frank Harris' My life and loves.

1934 saw the publication of Henry Miller's Tropic of cancer, after a delay of nearly two years. The delays were caused primarily by the printer, who did not feel the book would reimburse the firm for the expensive printing, and in whose opinion it read more like a medical treatise than a work of literary merit, and by Kahane's lawyer, who advised him not to advertise and to issue it as a privately printed book, not under the Obelisk imprint. Kahane obeyed his lawyer, but Miller, under no such restraints, began a publicity compaign that carried news of the book across the Channel and the Atlantic. Kahane spent the next several months terrified of the outcome. Some bookstores were hostile to the Miller work, but on the whole, his apprehension had been in vain. Kahane went on publishing Miller titles, Aller retour (1935), Black Spring (1936), Max and the white phagocytes (1938), and ended with Tropic of capricorn (1939).

Tropic of Cancer brought Miller tributes and sneers from all sides. One of the most fervent fans was Lawrence Durrell, who saluted it as the "copybook of ⌜his⌝ generation". Miller wrote back and soon Miller and Durrell were collaborating on a series of books, known as the Villa Seurat series, named after Miller's house. Intended as an off-shoot of the Obelisk Press, it consisted of books chosen by Miller and Durrell, but published by Kahane. The advantages being that Kahane would have the money to publish and Villa Seurat could take advantage of his distribution facilities. Villa Seurat declared its intention to publish books nobody would understand, those no publisher would dare publish, the book that every writer has in him, but cannot write because there would be no possibility of publishing it afterwards. It would interest itself in not merely the unprintable book, but also in the unwritable book. High ambitions! Unfortunately after

issuing only three books, the partners dispersed, war driving them out of France. Two days after war was declared in 1940, Jack Kahane was found dead, apparently stricken by the sheer horror of it all.

Three Mountains Press

Shortly after his arrival in Paris, Bill Bird came upon a small press on the Ile Saint Louis, where its owner, Roger Dévigne, was turning out fine books by hand. Apprenticing himself to Dévigne, Bird absorbed the rudiments of printing in a very short time and was soon considering opening his own shop. When a near-by place fell vacant, Bird installed an ancient Mathieu press and announced the creation of the Three Mountains Press. At the same time he was the European manager (and one of the founders) of the Consolidated Press Association. Although the time he was able to devote to his printing business was limited, he became a remarkably influential publisher.

The first books issued were of no special value; it was only after a meeting with Hemingway in Italy, who introduced him to Pound, that he began to think of printing works by modern writers. Pound suggested a series of books all on the same subject, thereby securing the subscribers for a long period. Bird added his idea of making each volume into an experiment in typography, and thus the series on the state of English writing was born. First came Pound's Indiscretions, or, Une revue de deux mondes, an auto-biographical fragment. As an experiment in typography, it did not quite satisfy, but Bird and Pound were unconcerned. Three Mountains was not a commercial press and the next time Bird would do better. Indiscretions appeared in March 1923 and the next month Bird issued Ford Madox Ford's Women and men, a collection of reminiscences that ably demonstrated Ford's story-telling capabilities. In May Bird issued another book in the series, William Carlos Williams' The Great American novel. By this time, Bird was tired and realizing very quickly that it was not possible to be a journalist by day and a printer by night. When work on the Williams book became more and more delayed, he enlisted the aid of a fellow-printer, Herbert Clarke, who had had his own press in Paris for some time. The subsequent Williams book then bore the imprint "Finished printing in May 1923, by H. Clarke and William Bird ..." The same month saw the completion of Elimus, a story by a British wood merchant of a young emigrant's disappointments in Canada, written while the merchant was serving as a colonel in the British Air Force in India. Elimus was the first typographical success; it was a harmonious blend of illustration and text and together with another book in the series, England, by B.M.G. Adams, was a demonstration of how far Bird had advanced in his art.

When first advertising the six books in the Three Mountains series, Bird had left a blank beside the author of the last one. He had a promise from Hemingway to write something for him, but McAlmon was taking all that Hemingway was writing. Bird suggested a compilation of miniatures along the lines of the ones that had already appeared in the Little review under

the title In our time. Hemingway agreed to write some new ones and the last book in the series was ready in November 1923, although only officially released in March 1924, due to a printing error in the first sets.

Pound, who was always very much in evidence around the Press, announced even before the publication of In our time, that he would shortly be using the Press to bring out one of his annual outbursts. This proved to be A draft of XVI cantos, which was only released in January of 1925, after some dissatisfaction on the part of Pound with the illustrations by Mike Strater.

After ridding himself of Pound's opus, Bird turned to McAlmon's Distinguished air. This was a book that had caused its author much worry, but it is considered by many to be his best. Set in the homosexual milieu of Berlin, it shows McAlmon's capabilities. In this book he concentrated on the humanity in individuals, showing them without apologies, without explanation, rather in the manner of a father looking down at his children. Distinguished air was the last book officially put out under the Three Mountains imprint. In December 1925, with no books scheduled to appear, Bird drew up a list of books he had sent to Beach. He found an early work of his on French wines had far outsold all his Three Mountains publications, a comment on the preferences of Miss Beach's customers. With the exception of a small collection of poems printed for Krebs Friend, the backer of the Transatlantic Review, the McAlmon book was his last publication. In December 1928, after three years of having produced nothing, Bird sold his press to Nancy Cunard.

While not really producing works of real lasting literary value, Bird was one of the few publishers to actually take a stand on the business practices of the commercial publishers. He called for the repeal of copyright legislation, feeling that if copyright went, this would stop the commercial publishers from issuing only highly profitable books and that they could then concentrate on books of worth, books that would be of credit to the publisher. He also called for authors to sell their manuscripts to the highest bidder, thereby getting all their money at one blow, and not being dependent on the royalties. This he tried to do in his own operation, placing more value on the books than on the profits, and this to a large degree, was the basic philosophy behind all the Parisian publishers.

Suggestions for further reading

Beach, Sylvia. Shakespeare & Company. New York, 1959.
Callaghan, Morley. That summer in Paris. New York, 1963.
Crosby, Caresse. The passionate years. New York, 1953.
Cunard, Nancy. These were the Hours. Carbondale, Ill., 1969.
Flanner, Janet. Paris was yesterday. New York, 1972.
Ford, Hugh. Published in Paris. New York, 1975.
Glassco, John. Memoirs of Montparnasse. New York, 1970.
Hemingway, Ernest. A moveable feast. New York, 1964.
Kahane, Jack. Memoirs of a booklegger. London, 1939.
McAlmon, Robert. Being geniuses together. London, 1938.
Putnam, Samuel. Paris was our mistress. New York, 1949.